

The Sealed Scroll and the Secret Song

Cosmic Controversy Series: Part 11

Study Guide

– Pastor Michael Oxentenکو

I. THE SANCTUARY OF PRAISE

Daniel 7:9, 13

⁹ As I looked, thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days took his seat; his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, its wheels were burning fire. ¹³ I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

1 Timothy 6:15

Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Jude 1:24-25

²⁴ Now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish before the presence of his glory with rejoicing, ²⁵ to the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Revelation 1:8

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 4:8

And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”

Revelation 11:17

Saying, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.”

Psalm 90:1-2

¹ *Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.* ² *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

A. The Ancient of Days

1. In the book of Daniel, God is called the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9, 13).
2. How far back is ancient? According to the Bible, God is older than time itself. Therefore we can say that God is super-luminous.
3. God is not contained by the speed of light, and He is not controlled by the time barrier as we understand it.
4. God is the Ancient of Days in the Bible. And nothing is impossible for Him within the moral framework of whom He is because God is the Potentate of time (1 Timothy 6:15; Jude 1:24-25).
5. The book of Revelation begins with God's statement about Himself in relation to time – He is the First and the Last (Revelation 1:8).
6. The word “Almighty” in the book of Revelation is the word “Pantokrator,” and it means “the one who holds everything” (Revelation 4:8). Nowhere in the Bible is there any doubt that God is eternal and that God has all the power there is (Revelation 11:17).
7. God is the only being in the universe who knows everything there is to know and who holds universal power (Psalm 90:1-2).

Deuteronomy 33:27

The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Romans 1:20

Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

1 John 5:11

And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Genesis 21:33

Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.

Exodus 3:14

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

1 Timothy 1:17

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

B. God Eternal

1. God is ***Eternal***. He is the ***Potentate*** of time. He is the ***Author*** of eternity. He is the ***Real-time*** LORD (Deuteronomy 33:27, Romans 1:20; 1 John 5:11).
2. God is the constant of the universe and not relative to time dilation calculations (Genesis 21:33). He is outside of time, and within time, at the same time. Before there was a "was," God is the Great "I AM" (Exodus 3:14).
3. God deserves to be worshiped because God is the eternal being. And long after the universe will be rolled up like a scroll His days will have just begun (1 Timothy 1:17).

Revelation 4:1-3

¹ After this I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up hither, and I will show you what must take place after this." ² At once I was in the Spirit, and lo, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne! ³ And he who sat there appeared like jasper and carnelian, and round the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald.

Revelation 11:19

Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

Revelation 4:4-6

⁴ Round the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clad in white garments, with golden crowns upon their heads. ⁵ From the throne issue flashes of lightning, and voices and peals of thunder, and before the throne burn seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God; ⁶ and before the throne there is as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And round the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind.

Exodus 25:31

“And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The base and the shaft of the lampstand shall be made of hammered work; its cups, its capitals, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it.”

Exodus 30:18

“You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing. And you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it.”

2 Chronicles 3:10-14

¹⁰ *In the most holy place he made two cherubim of wood and overlaid them with gold.*
¹¹ *The wings of the cherubim together extended twenty cubits: one wing of the one, of five cubits, touched the wall of the house, and its other wing, of five cubits, touched the wing of the other cherub; ¹² and of this cherub, one wing, of five cubits, touched the wall of the house, and the other wing, also of five cubits, was joined to the wing of the first cherub. ¹³ The wings of these cherubim extended twenty cubits; the cherubim stood on their feet, facing the nave. ¹⁴ And he made the veil of blue and purple and crimson fabrics and fine linen, and worked cherubim on it.*

2 Chronicles 5:7-8

⁷ *So the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim.*
⁸ *For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering above the ark and its poles.*

C. The Heavenly Sanctuary

1. The heavenly scene in the book of Revelation begins with an open door and a call for John to come up (Revelation 4:1).
2. In Revelation 4:1-3, John moves from here to there in an instant of time. Suddenly he finds himself in the very presence of God before the eternal throne of God.
3. In many ways, the heavenly scene of Revelation 4 resembles the earthly sanctuary:
 - God’s **throne** is the **Ark of the Covenant** (Revelation 4:2; 11:19).
 - The **seven torches** of God burn brightly before the throne like the **seven-branch candlestick** in the Holy Place (Revelation 4:5; Exodus 25:31). [See also: Exodus 25:37-40]
 - There are **24 elders** who correspond to the **24 divisions of temple service** (Revelation 4:4). [See also: 1 Chronicles 24:1-19]
 - There is a **sea of glass** like the **bronze sea** in the outer court (Revelation 4:6; Exodus 30:18).
 - There are **four living creatures** like the **four cherubim** in the Most Holy place of Solomon’s temple (Revelation 4:6; 2 Chronicles 3:10-14; 5:7-8).

Revelation 4:8-11

⁸ *And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all round and within, and day and night they never cease to sing, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”* ⁹ *And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and ever,* ¹⁰ *the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,* ¹¹ *“Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou didst create all things, and by thy will they existed and were created.”*

Matthew 27:52-53

⁵² *The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised,* ⁵³ *and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.*

D. Heaven’s Song

1. A close look at Revelation 4 reveals that the purpose of Heaven is worship. The first truth we encounter in this heavenly scene is that Heaven is a sanctuary designed for cosmic worship (Revelation 4:8-11).
2. Heaven is a holy house and a timeless temple made for praise and prayer in the presence of God. The unfallen and sinless universe worships God (Revelation 4:8).
3. From Revelation 4:8 to Revelation 4:11, there is a transition from the oldest creatures in the universe to the new comers in Heaven.
4. In Revelation 4:4, the four and twenty elders have white robes and crowns which in the Greek are literally “wreaths of victory.” That means they are individuals who have finished the race, and God has given them their crown.
5. The four and twenty elders were resurrected shortly after Jesus’ resurrection as recorded in Mathew 27:52. They are the first fruits of a resurrected humanity. Jesus did not refuse worship in the New Testament because He was God in human flesh.
6. In Revelation 4:11, the 24 elders throw their crowns before God and worship Him for different reasons than that of the four living creatures. As resurrected saints, the 24 elders praise God because they know personally that God can call into being things that are not.
7. The 24 elders have tasted God’s resurrection power, and they are filled with praise because God is omnipotent in power. God is not only eternal, He is also all powerful. And they know everything that is comes from Him.

8. To this point, Heaven's worship is limited to praise for God's eternal nature and His all-powerful being. That alone is sufficient reason to recognize that God is God, and to bend the knee and sing the doxology again. Yet, it is not enough to justify that worship continue forever.

II. COSMIC CONTROVERSY

Revelation 5:1-5

And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals;² and I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"³ And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it,⁴ and I wept much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, "Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

A. Cosmic Crisis

1. The worship scene in Revelation 4 has a limit. If all there is of God is His eternal nature and omnipotence, eventually Heaven's worship becomes a routine that rests on these two obvious facts for all time and songs cease to be new.
2. Consequently, Revelation 4 ends with a crisis in worship. This crisis was not here. The crisis was there. The question raised, "Is there any more to sing about God or is worship doomed to stifle, and praise destined to become a tape that simply repeats itself for all time?"
3. The Universe could not get beyond the truth that God is the Creator:
 - Is God only an eternal being and a powerful being?
 - Is there no other truth about God then these two truths?
 - Is this the only song there is to sing about God?
 - Is there a heart inside the God who has everything and who has always been?
4. There was no way to answer these questions before the cross of Christ. In fact, it appeared God by nature was a selfish being. Satan framed this appearance and threw it in God's face.
5. The land of song became a place of weeping because worship can only go so far if all there is to know of God are lyrics about power and timelessness (Revelation 5:4). At this point, the Apostle John's eye is directed to the very Throne of God where a mystery is locked within a scroll (Revelation 5:1). The scroll has seven seals with a secret song that cannot be sung unless someone opens the scroll of Heaven's hymnal (Revelation 5:2-3).

Exodus 15:11

“Who is like thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, majestic in holiness, terrible in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”

Psalm 113:4-6

⁴ The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! ⁵ Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high, ⁶ who looks far down upon the heavens and the earth?

Exodus 34:6

The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.”

Psalm 86:15

But thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Psalm 103:8

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

Psalm 145:8

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

B. God’s Character in Question

1. At the heart of the Great Controversy is a two-fold question: “Who is like God?” “And what is God like?” (Exodus 15:11; Psalm 113:4-6; Exodus 34:6; Psalms 86:15; 103:8; 145:8).
2. If there is no more to God than His power and eternal nature, then sooner or later the songs will end and Heaven’s worship will fizzle into silence. And so the universe was gripped in the throes of a cosmic challenge.
3. When Satan implicated God in tyranny, the whole creation looked like a cosmic scandal:
 - How can God who is eternal in power and timeless in nature give of Himself in time and sacrifice?
 - How can God who has everything really give anything?
 - How can a God who commands love really love?
 - Is there no more to sing than the song of timelessness and the song of power? Is there no more to God than these two songs?
 - And where can the music go when these two songs cannot be sung with any deeper meaning?
 - Is God hollow inside and nothing more than an animated piece of dynamite that has no moral heart?

Revelation 5:1-2, 4-5

And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals;² and I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?”⁴ and I wept much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Revelation 22:16

“I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star.”

C. The Sealed Scroll

1. In the context of Revelation 5:1, it is clear that the scroll belongs to God. His strong right hand holds it.
2. The scroll is written on both sides like the stone tables of the Ten Commandments (Revelation 5:1).
3. The scroll belongs to the throne because the throne is the heavenly Ark of the Covenant. This Covenant scroll that belongs to God in the Most Holy Place holds a mystery and secret song that no one can sing unless someone opens it (Revelation 5:2)
4. The land of song is broken by the sound of the prophet’s weeping at the scene of a stunted song (Revelation 5:4). An earthly observer overcome with Heaven’s sad predicament weeps for Heaven in pain:
 - Who can open the scroll and who can see inside?
 - Who can really see inside of God, and who can declare what is deep within Him?
 - Who can read the mystery of the secret song deep within the scroll?
5. There is a transition in these verses from power to moral praise. This is the point in the history of the universe where Heaven has discovered the secret song that is deep within the scroll.
6. The scene of majesty and power is suddenly broken by a sense of tragedy and triumph mingled into one Hero who stands upon the scene. A new figure enters the sanctuary in Heaven and all eyes are fixed on Him. He holds the unique credentials to open the scroll (Revelation 5:5).
7. The elder who just ceased his song of power says, “Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered, so that He can open the scroll and its seven seals” (Revelation 5:5).
8. In Revelation 22:16, Jesus leaves no doubt that He is “the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright Morning Star.”

III. JESUS, THE LION AND THE LAMB

Isaiah 53: 4-7

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

Revelation 5:5

Then one of the elders said to me, "Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

Revelation 5:6-10

⁶ And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth; ⁷ and he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints; ⁹ and they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰ and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth."

A. The Lion/Lamb Who Overcame

1. The root of David is the Lamb, and the root of David is also the Lion, with two natures merged into one (Isaiah 53:7: Revelation 5:5).
2. The Lamb is a sacrificial victim (Isaiah 53:4-6). The Lion is a conquering giant (Revelation 5:5).
3. At no time in the past had a lion been a lamb. At no time in the past had a lamb journeyed from the altar to the Ark of the Covenant inside the Most Holy Place.
4. Lambs die at the altar, and they never come back. So what is the Lamb doing at the Ark of the Covenant of God's throne standing like a priest?
5. The credentials of the Lion/Lamb are described in the verses of Revelation 5:6, 9-10. There are three qualifications the Lion/Lamb possesses that give Him the unique right to open the scroll and to unlock the *secret song* within:
 - Qualification 1: *The Lamb stands even though He was slain.*

- Qualification 2: *The Lamb has seven horns.*
 - Qualification 3: *The Lamb has seven eyes.*
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Revelation 5:6-7

⁶ *And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth;* ⁷ *and he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.*

Revelation 5:9-10

⁹ *And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation,* ¹⁰ *and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth.”*

B. The Lamb Stands Who Was Slain

1. No lamb had ever come back from the dead. No sacrifice had ever survived the altar of sacrifice. And yet here is the Lamb that stands having been slain (Revelation 5:6-7).
 2. The Greek uses a perfect passive participle for slain to describe an event initiated in the past that has a future impact because of the past (Revelation 5:9-10). This is an eternal verb that is used in the Greek:
 - The lamb was slain, but he still bleeds.
 - The lamb was slain, but he still stands.
 - The Lamb was slain, and whatever happened to Him back then matters in the here and now.
 3. The Lamb was slain, yet here He stands, and there is no more Lamb being slain. The Lamb now stands because the Lamb is now the conquering Lion! (Revelation 5:5)
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Habakkuk 3:4

His brightness was like the light, rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power.

Revelation 5:6-7

⁶ *And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth;* ⁷ *and he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.*

Revelation 5:3

³ *And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it,*

C. The Lamb Has Seven Horns

1. A horn in the Bible represents power. In Habakkuk 3:4, the Bible describes Jesus' power prophetically in these same terms.
2. Jesus' nail-pierced hand holds the power to save the universe and the sinner too. The Hebrew says literally, "horns were from his hand, and there he veiled his power."
3. The nailed-pierced hands of Jesus hold the power. The nail-pierced hands of Jesus hold seven horns of perfect power.
4. There has to be perfect power to open that scroll. It takes perfect strength to unlock its seven seals, and no one was able to pull it off, including the four living creatures (Revelation 5:3).
5. The Lamb is able because He has seven horns (Revelation 5:6-7). Seven is the number for perfection in the Bible. The number seven in Hebrew means literally an "oath." And when God swears an oath, there is perfect power behind His promise.
6. The number seven is the number for God's perfect promise and perfect Covenant oath. Perfect power resides in the Lamb with seven horns.
7. It takes seven horns to open the scroll with seven seals.

Revelation 5:6

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Revelation 5:4

And I wept much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

John 14:8-9

⁸ *Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied."* ⁹ *Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

D. The Lamb Has Seven Eyes

1. The eyes are the seven spirits of God that were sent out into all the earth. The Lamb is the source of the Holy Spirit of God that permeates the universe in every direction (Revelation 5:6).
2. The perfect spirit of God is described as seven because the mind of God is perfect and omnipresent.

3. In Revelation 5:4, John said that no one was worthy “to look into it,” that is, the scroll. In the Old Testament, whoever looked inside the Ark of the Covenant was struck dead. So here stands the Lamb that was dead and He is worthy to look inside the scroll.
4. It takes seven eyes to see inside the scroll with seven seals. And the Lamb can see everything there is to know about God. The seven eyes represent perfect sight in every direction:
 - North, South, East, and West (four directions).
 - Up and down (fifth and sixth directions).
 - Eye of discernment (seventh direction).
5. The Seventh direction goes deep inside. It takes seven eyes to see everything and to seek what is deep inside the mind of God and the scroll with seven seals.
6. The Lamb is the only one who can see inside the heart and mind of God to reveal God to a universe that cannot see.
7. In John 14:8-9, Philip asked Jesus just before the cross, “Lord, show us the Father.” Jesus replied if you have seen me, you have seen the Father.
8. Only Jesus can see deep inside of God to declare Him with authority. Jesus is the revelation of who God is deep inside.
9. It takes the Lamb with seven eyes to open the scroll with seven seals.